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*One Hundred Years Ago, On June 24,
1839, Abraham Lincoln Became A
Member Of The Springfield Town
Council.*



*Abraham Lincoln
and the Springfield Town Council*



1939

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On June 24, 1839, Abraham
Lincoln Became A Member Of
The Board Of Trustees For
The Town Of Springfield. S



I live not in myself, but I become
portion of that around me;

Byron



ON JUNE 20, 1839, Gov. Thomas Carlin of Illinois issued a ukase ordering the state officers to remove from Vandalia to Springfield within the following two weeks. Springfield was in metamorphosis. Like a moth emerging from its cocoon, the young town began to spread its gossamer wings and add a new beauty to its surroundings.



The newly found beauty proved, for some years to come, to be more spiritual than material. The mud holes and hog wallows remained, but the drabness and tranquillity of an ordinary county town disappeared. The partially complete state house in the public square was a symbol of its broken bonds. Business boomed on every hand and soon, very soon, Lincoln's Springfield was to take its place as the political and social hub of the state. It had been converted from a satellite to a sun.



In this bee-hive setting we find young Mr. Lincoln, junior partner of the law firm of Stuart and Lincoln, with a political background of three terms in the Legislature and a future full of political ambitions. Though his aspirations were to carry him far in the state and national framework, he had little to give his own municipality. It can safely be said that





Lincoln was an active participant in local civic affairs, but an indifferent leader. Yet he did hold one position in the town's political mold.

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To the Board of Trustees of the Town of Springfield was entrusted the affairs of local government. The Board members were elected annually in the spring and five members made up the whole. On June 24, 1839, Stephen H. Treat, a board member, finding his arduous duties as circuit judge would interfere with his civic obligations, resigned from the Board. Abraham Lincoln, present at the meeting was duly elected to the vacated chair and formally sworn in.

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This little known episode of Lincoln's life presents an interesting contrast with his later political career. Of his work in the Council we shall hear more at a later and more appropriate date, when it shall be discovered that the selection of Lincoln as a member was not accidental but perhaps planned. At any rate his connection with the council, which by the way was the last in the history of the town, was important in the light of later events.

THEODORE S. CHARNNEY

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The cachet symbolic of this event represents Lincoln and his fellow members of the Town Council in session. Prepared by the POOR RICHARD PRESS. 5053 Montana Street. Chicago, Illinois.



